

NATURAL DEFENSES

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Synopsis: Cast identifies and discusses the importance of natural defenses.

Cast: Jellyfish
Ditty
Turtle (Theodore)
Opossum
Staff

Jellyfish:(Singing)

I live in the ocean. I swim in the sea.
I dive and I splash. You can't play with me.
(Repeat)

Staff: Hello! Who are you??

Ditty: And why can't we play with you?

Jellyfish:I am a jellyfish, phylum cnidaria (pronounced ni daria). You would not want to play with me.

Ditty: Sure!! I would be happy to play with you, Daria.
You are pretty!!

Jellyfish:I may be pretty, but you cannot play with me. I have 'natural defenses.'

Ditty: Natural fences?? I don't see any fences.

Jellyfish: Not fences. Natural DE fences.

Staff: (to audience) Can you say natural defenses??

All: Natural Defenses.

Staff: That was pretty good, one more time!!

All: Natural defenses!

Staff: Great!! Good job.

Ditty: But what are 'natural defenses' and why can't I play with the jellyfish?!?!?!?

Jellyfish: A natural defense is something that protects me from you or you from me.

Ditty: Protects me?? Like the shot the doctor gave me protects me from getting sick??

Jellyfish: Well... sorta like that.

Ditty: Well... how does it protect you?

Jellyfish: My natural defense is a stinger kind of thing. If you touch me, you will get stung. Your skin

will hurt and you will get a rash that will burn and hurt.

Ditty: Well that is no way to make friends.

Jellyfish: I don't like to sting people, but I am very delicate and could be killed by someone's touch. That is why I sting before I am hurt. To protect myself from danger. (Begins to drift off stage)

Ditty: (To Staff) So that is a natural defense. It is kind of like fences, but you can't see them or climb on them like you can real fences.

Staff: Yes, but there are other natural defenses, too. Can you think of some other things that animals use to keep you away from them?

Ditty: (pondering) Keep us away from them?? I stay away from skunks because they smell bad.

Turtle: (Enters stage area)

Staff: Very good. The skunk's natural defense is its bad smell or scent. Can you think of another?

Ditty: Nope.

Staff: What about our friend over there?

Ditty: Theodore!! My turtle pal!!! Do you have natural defenses?

Turtle: Natural defenses. Sure that is about all that I am. My shell is a natural defense. It protects me from predators, that want to hurt me.
(turtle wanders off stage humming)

Ditty: Natural defenses?!? A hard shell?? Is the hard shell on crawfish a natural defense?

Opossum:(Begins to wander on stage)

Staff: It sure is, Ditty!! Just like the hard shell on the turtle, a crawfish's shell or carapace protects it from predators. What other natural defenses might animals have?

Ditty: I dunno. There is an opossum. Might she know about other animals with natural defenses?

Opossum: Hello Ditty! I know a lot about natural defenses. Opossums are nocturnal animals. That means that we are wandering around in the open primarily at night. That is a natural

defense since most of our predators are awake during the day.

Staff: Nocturnal. That is a good word. Can you say nocturnal?

All: Nocturnal.

Staff: Good. Once more??

All: Nocturnal.

Ditty: Are there any other natural defenses you know about?

Opossum: Oh, Yes Ditty. Opossums are well-known for pretending to be dead to avoid being eaten by predators. This is called "playing dead" or "playing possum." When opossums think they are being threatened they will go into a catatonic state where they appear to be dead, they go limp and their breathing becomes almost undetectable. They wake-up when the perceived danger has passed.

Ditty: WOW!! That is a cool natural defense. It has been neat learning about how animals protect themselves!! Right, Kids??

Staff: Good let's think about how we can protect things, people and places in our environment now.

BRIDGE to next skit